

Construction Risk Advisor

CLEANING TOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that every precaution is taken to prevent the spread of the disease. At the workplace, employees may need to use equipment and tools that their co-workers have used. As such, it is important to stress the need to properly clean tools and equipment after each use.

When it comes to tools that have not been visibly contacted by blood or other bodily fluids, the following cleaning procedures are recommended and should be communicated to your employees.

SOAP AND WATER

According to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the virus that causes COVID-19 can live on plastic and other surfaces for up to 72 hours. Equipment can be cleaned with water and a mild soap using a damp cloth. Following this cleaning, tools should then be left to rest for at least three days.

DILUTED BLEACH SOLUTION

When using a diluted bleach solution, have your employees adhere to the following steps:

1. Start by removing dirt and grease on the tool using a damp cloth, mild soap and water.
2. Dip a second, clean cloth into the diluted bleach solution.
3. Wring out the cloth so that it is not soaked and dripping.
4. While holding the tool with the cloth, wipe each handle gently. Be careful not to allow any liquid to drip or flow into the equipment.
5. Never use any other cleaning product alongside the diluted bleach solution.
6. Leave the equipment to dry naturally.
7. While using a diluted bleach solution, employees should avoid touching their face and should wash their hands immediately upon completing the process.

Diluted bleach solutions should be made by mixing 5 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons per quart.

STAYING SAFE

Additionally, employees should:

- Wash their hands before and after the process.
- Be properly trained in the use of the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Never use flammable or combustible substances near equipment.

If a piece of equipment has come into contact with blood, more advanced cleaning methods are required.

While efficiency and productivity are important factors in the workplace, the health and safety of your employees should be your top priority. The COVID-19 pandemic can serve as a reminder that taking the time to perform proper cleaning and decontamination procedures is a serious matter.

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Source: Milwaukee Tool